

**REMARKS**

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

**Status of Claims:**

No claims are currently being added.

Claims 2-11, 19-21, 24-32, 38-40, 46, 54-56 and 59 are currently being canceled.

Claims 1, 12-18, 22, 33-37, 42 and 50 are currently being amended.

This amendment and reply cancels and amends claims in this application. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claim remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier.

After canceling and amending the claims as set forth above, claims 1, 12-18, 22, 23, 33-37, 42-45, 47-53, 57, 58, 60 and 61 remain pending in this application.

**Indication of Allowable Subject Matter:**

Applicants appreciate the indication of allowable subject matter made in the Office Action with respect to claims 7, 28, 46 and 54. By way of this amendment and reply, presently pending independent claim 1 has been amended to include the features of "objected to" (and now canceled) claim 7, whereby presently pending independent claim 1, as well as dependent claims 12-18, 45, 47, 48 and 58 that depend either directly or indirectly from claim 1, are now in allowable form based on the indications made in the Office Action with respect to claim 7. Also, by way of this amendment and reply, presently pending independent claim 22 has been amended to include the features of "objected to" (and now canceled) claim 28, whereby presently pending independent claim 22, as well as dependent claims 23, 33-37 and 60 that depend directly from claim 22, are now in allowable form based on the indications made in the Office Action with respect to claim 28. Further, by way of this amendment and reply, presently pending independent claim 42 has been amended to include the features of "objected to" (and now canceled) claim 46, whereby presently pending independent claim 42, as well as dependent claims 43, 44 and 49 that depend directly from claim 42, are now in allowable form based on the indications made in the Office Action with respect to claim 46. Lastly, by way of this amendment and reply, presently pending independent claim 50 has been

amended to include the features of “objected to” (and now canceled) claim 54, whereby presently pending independent claim 50, as well as dependent claims 51, 52, 57 and 61 that depend directly from claim 50, are now in allowable form based on the indications made in the Office Action with respect to claim 54.

**Claim Rejections – Prior Art:**

In the Office Action, claims 1, 3-5, 8-11, 42-45, 47-53, 55-58 and 61 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,770,028 to Maley et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,970,145 to Bennetto et al.; claim 6 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Maley et al. in view of Bennetto et al. and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,528,020 to Dai et al.; claims 1-3, 6, 10, 12-24, 27, 31, 33-40 and 58-60 were rejected U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,571,401 to Lewis et al. in view of Dai et al. and Bennetto et al.; claims 25, 26 and 30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lewis et al. in view of Dai et al. and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,315,956 to Foulger et al.; and claims 1, 3, 6 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dai et al. in view of Bennetto et al.

Due to the amendments made to each of the presently pending independent claims so that they now include the features of an “objected to” claim (see above discussion in the ‘Indication of Allowable Subject Matter’ section of the Remarks), these rejections are now moot. Please note that Applicants do not agree with these rejections, but in the interest of expediting prosecution, Applicants are amending the independent claims as discussed above in order to obtain a quick allowance of this application, and whereby Applicants reserve the right to prosecute broader claims in a continuation and/or divisional application, if desired.

**Conclusion:**

Since all of the issues raised in the Office Action have been addressed in this Amendment and Reply, Applicants believe that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and an early indication of allowance is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a

check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing or a credit card payment form being unsigned, providing incorrect information resulting in a rejected credit card transaction, or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicants hereby petition for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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